

THE
INFANCY
OF
ELDERS.

14 July 1647
[9.]

Short Treatise composed for Vindica-
tion of the Christian liberty of Free-
borne denizens of England.

OR A

Refutation of the Tyrannicall unlawfull mis-
government of our Church by
Lay-Elders.

Written by J. S. Minister of the Word
in *Lancashire*.

Gal. 5. 1.

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made
us free, and be not entangled againe with the yoke of bondage,*

Printed in the Yeare, 1647.

INFANCY

ELDERS

Along the Atlantic coast of Virginia
from the Christian Library of Exeter.

Some of the best of the

OR A

Relation of the 17th Annual unlawful mil-

Government of our Church by

For the

Written by W. S. Minister of the Word

in London

Published in the Year 1847

Printed in the Year 1847

The Infancy of Elders.

Have long time exercised my patience in forbearance to write something of this Subject, tryling away many dayes, in a tedious expectation, that some one better able, would have prevented me, who more fully and accurately (then I know my self able to performe) might have perfected this worke; but seeing the daily inroaching tyranny of our new moduled Church Officers, spreading like Gangrenes over the whole body of the Kingdome, and none offering neither for safety to himselfe; and his hereditary freedome, nor for prevention of evil to his brethren, to calterize, or take up a veine in them, to obstruct this new dangerous hor disease in our Ecclesiasticall body; some though convinced in judgement that they are pernicious mischiefs in a Kingdome, yet basely fearing man more then God, forbears to write against them; others partly Classicall, partly Episcopall, but really nothing, hovering aloofe; with the reare-Mouse to see the battrell betwixt birds and beasts, with resolution to joyn with the stronger party; and now perceiving the Classes headily run on, forbearing to stop their proud career, like brutt beasts, creepe into some crib, and there stop their mouths with meat, and thinke with dumbnesse to fatten themselves without giving testimony to the world of their humane reason; and indeed generally lulling themselves in a stottish silence, have made themselves guilty thus farre of betraying their owne freedoms, to the irreverend censures of our new stamped Elders. I thought it my duty to shoot this poore paper bullet at them, which if it take no impression upon them, yet I hope at the rebound, it may be taken up by some, who perceiving the sottnesse of my Ammunition, will prepare harder ware against these impetuous furies, however it will be some evidence to future ages to procure a non-guilty upon my name, for traitorously consenting to the

subversion

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Subversion of the fundamentall-Lawes of this Kingdome, and betraying that liberty and freedome which as a Free-borne child of God I ought to enjoy, into the hands of ignorant Tyrants; and like wise serve to free me from a brand of instabillity or wandering in my principles, suffering my selfe to bee tossed too and fro with every pisse of wind: Know Reader, I am not of such a Weather-cock temper as to bee moved from my well-grounded station; though the North wind bluster high, let others, who lately were of my opinion, till the magnetick force of earthly preferment withdrew them, turne Hyperborean dotterells, and imitate the fashions prescribed them by holy Highlanders, whom the unreasonable-nesse of some late winters, forced Southward, more to succour themselves in a warmer clime, then out of any good intended to us natives; let such I say play the Apes after them, setting up their holy forme of worship and Church-government, & use the learned perswasions which a proud Presbyter (lately reputed a good man, whilst ten pound *per annum* at a private Chappell could satisfie him, bus now having betroathed a Parliament mans sister, is by the strong cordage of attractive Apron-strings drawne up a hill to a benefice of five hundred pound) labouring to draw his Auditory to the subscription hereof, told them (whose bare assertions with his rusticke Auditory passe for Oracles,) it was a government used in the Jewish Church, and therefore to be followed by us Christians; Oh rare Pulpit Rhetorick!

It pities my heart to thinke how the poore Country people are misled by these blinde guides, who poore Simpletons, perceiving the current of the times, are many of them troubled (having plumbecous head-peeces) to shape their Pulpit stiffe according to the humor thereof, in which they take more paines for saving their benefices, then their peoples soules; you can scarcely goe to heare a Sermon but the subject thereof is obedience to this godly government; and the Presbyterian satlings will blatter out, and quote almost every verse in the Bible that hath but the word Elder in it, to prove its lawfulness thereby; these silly *quondam* Sir-Johns, bus now Presbyter or Prefet Johns Parochiall Princes, doe more Lord it over Gods heritage, then ever *Baker, Wolfey* or *Land* did; instead of feeding, leading their flocks into captivity, forcing submissions to their impugious rules, contrary to the doctrine and late professions of most of them, and avouch Authority from the Parliament for to justify their proceedings herein, and proclaime commission for each one to be *summus sacerdos sui Clasis*; and the Eldership to bee Officers of the Church of Je-

the Christ by Authority of both Houses of Parliament, and who dare
say against it?

I am loath to set penne to paper to chaffe against any thing debated and
concluded in that High and Honourable Court, having hitherto laboured
to my power, to propagate their cause, which Cause was protested to bee
and expressly set downe in the Covenant, that it was the defence of his
Majesties person, the Protestant Religion, the firmamentall Lawes and li-
berty of the Subject, and to endeavour Reformation of Religion in the
Church of England, according to the holy word, but now they having set
up a Government, not agreeable to Gods word, nor consistent with
the fundamentall Lawes of this Kingdome (as I shall shew you anon)
I resolving with my self that it was better to obey God than man, did
for prevention of further mislesding captivè poore soules, for satis-
faction of some men wavering in opinion, for discharging of my
owne conscience, and for instructing not correcting the Honourable
Parliament, in hopes to add some good soules to the number of these
honest Patriots, who were but by law out-voted in the falling of this
Antichristian government, and in hopes to worke hereby a peacea-
ble and legall quashing of the same, adventure to publish this paper,
wherein I shall endeavour to anatomize this giddy government, and
shew its illegality, which understanding if I over through ignorance I
will upon convictione from better judgement grounded upon
sound divinity and reason, willingly recant my mistakes, and sub-
scribe to, and allow of a warreable Eldership. In the meane time I
crave pardon for a little freedom of language.

It may perchance be wondered at by some, that I being not of ve-
ry graine years my selfe, should dare to write any thing against the
Grandeets & Seniors of our times; but we have a Proverb amongst us,
That old men are twice children; and truly such are many of our El-
ders: they may perchance as babes desire the sincere milke of the
word; but I am sure many of them are not as yet grownne thereby, (*sed
matibus relinquitur*) I intend to have a bow with them armed to their best
advantage, admitting them their sage and politique capacities as El-
ders, and yet will take them off their feet, and throw them upon their
backes ere I leave them. In prosecution whereof, though it be not my
custome to play with words; yet for method sake, I will first insist u-
pon the definition of the word Elders, *Omnium enim qui de re aliqua in-
dicium ferre debet a definitione profectus, ut intelligatur quid sit de quo*

and prove that our Lay-Elders are no waies to be understood the things signified by the word.

Secondly, of Civill Elders in generall, and that here in *England*, our Lay-Elders are not within that notion.

Thirdly, of Spirituall Elders in generall, and that they cannot be rightly taken for such.

Fourthly, that Civill Elders are not to joyne with Spirituall in Ecclesiasticall affairs.

For the definition of the word Elder, *Verfagen* and divers others affirme, that it is an abreviation of a word which we borrow from the Saxons, called *Salden eldæ*, which word is used for grave, wise, and expert men, men which for their deserving parts, excellent above others, were made choice of to be Officers in the Common-wealth, or else for such their noble deservings, were promoted to dignity and honour: And hence hath that custome growne in *England*, That out of the Nobility were selected the most discreet, and grave Barons, and were made above the ranks of Barons, Baldermen: In the Danish tongue *Baldæ* in English *Elder*, a name we continue to this day: And indeed *Elder* and *Elders* are both one in the literall sense.

So like wise we have in every ancient Burrow, a Court of Baldermen, that is to say Elders, men of most wisdom and discretion, and these men were to bee chosen of others for their worthy and Noble vertues, according to which Mr. *Purchas* in his books called his Pilgrimage, fol. 141. saith, The Jews have an affirmative precept to wit rise before thine Elder, the word Elder being expounded in that place by *Rabbi* 70. saith, it signifieth a wise man, though young in years, and to him the people were to rise at some cubits distance, and being past to sit downe againe: according to this interpretation, my Lord Chief Justice grave and reverend Judge of the Law, in the first part of his Institutes, fol. 128. saith, *Aldermanus* sive dignatus, propter etatem, sed propter sapientiam, & dignitatem, ad id est, utrumque essentialem, & accidentalem. But say, I must not digresse too far from my business, for what doth this concerne our reverend Coblers, Wabblers, Taylors, Skinners, &c? the Ruling-Elders of this age, to whom I am sure the sense of this word is not applicable, unless in reference to their Trades and Handicrafts, and yet these silly upstart fellows have made Lay-Elders begin to puffe and swell already with pride, and conceit themselves by a wonderfull providence to be exalted above their

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their former equals expecting submission from the people as unto Rulers: for my part I shall acquit them of this crime, and give my voice that the poore simple bumpkins are not to be blamed for it: it being according to their education and tutoring; for such their Minister or High Priest tells them, that their government was used amongst the Jewes, well may they expect the circumstance or concomitance of their office: to follow along with the office it selfe (to wit) that according to the Jewish custome the people should rise up before them.

But this is not all that causeth this timpany of pride in them, they are further instructed, that they shall reap profit by their places, the same or more (their territories considered,) as Bishops formerly exacted from the people.

Now this considered, methinks, the people have very much betrayed their liberty, who gave any consent to this government: for that whereas formerly the greedy gripings of Bishops and their officers, were censured for high inroachments, upon the peoples priviledges and freedomes, and propriety in their goods, they must needs now expect a huge multiplication of extortion, from a numerous rable of Lay-Elders, poore and idle fellows put into Office, who being called from their Trades and Handicrafts, which was their livelihood, must now of necessity live upon the people. But I will proceed to a further explanation of the word.

The word Elder is sometimes taken for aged and hoary headed men, as Levit. the 19. cap. the 32. verse our English translation renders it *thus shalt rise before up the hoary headed*; And the 1. of Tim. 5. 1. It is used for a word of Age, not Office, and all translations of such places render it Senior not Presbiter, *rebuke not an Elder*, translated by Beza, by *junius & Tremellius, seniores non increpato*; by Erasmus, *seniores ne senius obarguas*, but all *seniores*, not *Presbiterum*. *Intreat him as a Father, the young men as Brethren*. It is likewise a word of age, the 1. of Pet. the 5. 1. *The Elders which are among you / exhort*, &c. and ver. 5. *likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder*, but in this latter place, it is a word both of Office and Age. Peter bidding them *feed the flock*, and therefore is the word there rendered *Presbyters*, as it is alwaies where it signifies Church Officers (but not comprehensible of lay Elders, of which none) in all other places it is rendered *seniores*.

Reader what is in other Countryes I cannot tell, but in this County of
burg.

ours, in which these Master-Ships Country Lay-Elders are leapt into Authority (upon a private petition of some lordly Pastors, and never heard of by many thousands, till the Ordinance came downe) I know not any one particular man of them that is comprised within the sense of the word, that is to be a hoary headed man, but they are generally so non-sensically called Elders in this interpretation; as they come short for challenging the name in the first, to wit) grave, wise, and expert.

Since God hath set these fellows over us as a punishment for our sins and a meere reproach unto the Nation, that men should rule over us that are not endowed with any thing to be honoured in them; no not so much as with this, which their *Ante-Damnations*, amongst the rest of their Arts, the hath qualified them with, might easily have bestowed upon them; but I will proceed a little further in expression of the word, and see if it will any wise concerne them.

The word Elder sometimes is a word of Ecclesiasticall Office, and not of age, and is as much as to say Priest or Bishop; and is scarce mentioned in the new Testament in any other sense, witness Mathew the 26. 3. Mark 16. 21. Jo. 11. 47. where it is rendered *Elders of the people*, which all Translators render *seniors*; in other places it is translated Presbyter *presbyteros* which in the Greeke signifies *seniores aetatis*; *Adagio presbyteri qui Ecclesia proficiunt*; the word being derived of *presbuto* *Legatus minor* to be sent an Embassadour; and this exposition I take to be most agreeable to the word of God, Paul telling us in the second to the Corinthians 3. 20. that the Ministers of the Gospel are Christs Embassadors, praying us by the Gospel to be reconciled to God; and 6. Ephes. 20. *Paul though in Prison makes Christ Embassador to speak the word boldly*; so that according to the sense of the word Presbyter, Lay-Elders are not to be understood thereby, only the Ministers of the Gospel, the Embassadors of Christ; sometime the word Elder is rendered *pastores*; that is *infectores*, overseers of their flocks, Acts the 20. 28; and in that Chapter it is both rendered Presbyter in the 17. ver. and *Episcopus* or Overseer in the 28. *Sunt enim Episcopi sacri gregis in infectores qui verbo & gubernationi preerunt quasi quasi speculatores in doctrinam & mores commisi gregis inquirebant*. Nor are our Lay-Elders within the comprise or reach of this word, for they have no flocks to feede, their high Priest takes that Office to himselfe. And I thinke they will thanke me for telling them so; for they would hate to be called Bishops.

And here by the way I thinke it were not amiss should I a little exp-
plane

plaine the meaning of that much wrested and abused Text of Scripture which our Novlists so much insist upon, to confine the people to a subjection to their new Eldership, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *The Elders which rule well account worthy of double honour, especially those which labour in word and doctrine*, by which Text they would perswade the people, that there ought to be ruling Lay-Elders as well as teaching Elders in the Church.

The Elders in that place is by all Translators rendered *Presbyters*, not *Seniors*, Lay-Elders or Rulers of the people, but I say *Presbyters*, that is Ministers of the gospel, Embassadors of Christ; so that it cannot be understood of ruling Laity, but ruling or governing Clergy; nor is this interpretation, either contrary to Gods word, as may be proved by other Texts of Scripture, nor doth it any wise gain say the practise of the Primitive Churches, for you may finde it recorded in *Polem. in vita Augusti. cap. 5.* that there may be as well ruling Ministers; as preaching Ministers, for some for administration of the Sacraments, for their wisdom and judgement were not meete to be Bishops and Pastors, and yet being not well versed in the language of the people over which they had the charge they wanted elocution to preach, and yet governed their Church well, as *Valerius* was a Bishop amongst the Romans, at that time *Paul* writ to *Tymothy*, and being a Grecian borne, and not skilled to pronounce the Latine, did not preach, and yet was honoured as a reverend Father of the Church, and Minister of Jesus Christ; so I beleeve wee have some great Presbyters rule in Welch Benefices, and know not how to teach in that language, and yet will think to have double honour from their Parishopers, and it is due unto them, but if they could teach too, then were they more to be esteemed.

Wee may read in the first of the Cor. 12. chap. *All men had not the same gifts, so one was given the spirit of wisdom, to another the spirit of faith, to another the spirit of healing, to another the spirit of miracles, to another divers kinds of tongues*, and ver. 28 It is said in the Church God hath set some, first *Apostles*, secondly, *Prophets*, and thirdly *Teachers*; so that if wee must goe the old way of expounding Scripture, to examine one place by another, wee may hence cleerely perceive, that that Text of *Tymothy* is to be understood, ruling Presbyters, and not ruling Lay-Elders; ruling Presbyters ordained by God and his Church, and all Translators that ever I did see render it Presbyter, understanding that the Elders which rule well, and are to be accounted worthy of double honour, mentioned in that Text, are spirituell men, *1 Cor. 12. 28.* Ministers of the Gospel, *Christ* Embassadors.

But admit the new Classicall wrestling of that Text, that it is to be understood of a ruling Laity; yet there can be nothing gathered from that pace to prove that such men are to meddle in Ecclesiasticall affaires, (but of that in his proper place) only that the Civill Elders, which governed the State well, were to be accounted worthy of double honour; but especially the spirituall Elders which governed the Church, and increased the flocke of Christ by their word and doctrine.

I have briefly done with the first part of this worke, to wit, the diffinition of the word Elder, and now I will proceed to the second branch touching Civill, or Lay-Elders in generall, in the number of whom our Lay-Elders are not to be reckoned.

Wee read that Jewish State was governed by Elders, almost in every Author, which writes any thing either of them, their State or Government; and more particularly and fully Mr. *Purchase* in his Pilgrimage, *folio* 110. testifieth of them thus, That their government was under 70. Elders according to the number of the persons which descended with Jacob into Egypt, and that the 70 assigned after to *Moses* in the 11. chapter of Numbers, were but continued in their former Office, with confirmation from on high, but not newly instituted, and ruled in Egypt, notwithstanding *Pharaohs* cruelty, and were by *Moses* and *Aron* assembled together, *Exod* 4. 29.

And thus it continued in *Josuebs* time, till they had conquered and inhabited severall Cities; then each City had its Sanhedrim or Councell of Elders, proportionable to the greatnesse thereof; as in Bethlem *Sanct* assembled 10 Elders about the matter of *Ruth*, *Ruth* 4. 2. 1 Chron. 23. 4. 2 Chron. 19. 8. and usually every Senate of Elders had a Levite or two to sit with them in judgement, because the Elders were ignorant of the Talmud or Law which was much altered, and enlarged by severall Governments of the University of Jerusalem, and was lastly complicated by *Rabbi Jochanan*, Anno Christi, 500. and called the Talmud, a rule in all causes Ecclesiasticall and Civill to this very day, amongst the Jewes.

God commanded *Moses* in the 11 of Numbers, saying, Gather unto me 70. men of the Elders of Israel, which thou knowest to be Elders of the people, and they shall beare the burden of the people, with thee &c.

This is a place much insisted upon to warrant our newtaking of Elders into the Church, to beare part of the Government; but I will make it manifest that this part of Scripture is no warrant for us to doe so here in England.

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The Government thus settled, saith *Jesephus* in his book of Antiquities, *Libro quarto, cap. 8.* was mixed the Monarchy being in *Moses*, but qualified with an aristocracy in the 70. and democracy (as it were) appeared in the often Assemblies of the people: & this but continued, saith he, till they desired a King and then it ceased; and whilst it continued, it was only for temporall affaires, the Elders not being to meddle in any Ecclesiasticall matter, for Levites only sate with them, because they were learned in the Talmud; not that of right it belonged unto them to sit there. *Goodwin* in his *Jewish Antiquities* fol. 199. and 198. he saith, how *Jesephus* appointed in every walled City secular Judges, which were their Elders to determine criminall offences.

I wonder that our Presbyterians should be so far braced with ignorance, as not to blush to urge this portion of Scripture for a warrant for their Court of Elders to be set up here in England, whereas it failes in every particular, to be any wise applicable to us; for,

First, the Jewes were governed by 70 Elders before; so was never England.

Secondly, *Moses* was both King and Priest among them; he was their Priest, and tooke great paines in his holy function with them, whereby he became lesse fitted to manage their civill affaires; and wee may likewise read, *Deut. 33. 5. Moses was among the righteous as King.*

I never knew that our Bishops or Presbyters ever exercised any Kingly Office in England, not hath it ever been, unless in these foure yeeres last past, whenas *Charles Stewart* being gone from his Parliament, and being denuded of his Kingly power, which power in conceit fell into the laps of our Assembly, who thereupon Enthusiastically by imaginary Revelations, publish, they must take to themselves Elders of the people to beare part of the burthen with them.

Thirdly, that was Gods owne immediate Act, and he put his spirit upon them, and they prophesied verse the 25; but this is a mere humane institution not warranted by any meanes, unless by such imaginary Revelations, and strange Oracles, which things since Christ himselfe came in the flesh have ceased, and why should wee now credit them?

I believe our Elders are not by their Office made wiser, or indowed with any supernaturall gifts at all, but continue still, though Mr. Elders: yet as arrant Blockheads as they were before; so that a man may say of them as one sayd of an ignorant Judge, sitting in his robes upon the Bench, *Yonder Judge is made fine by his place, his place not beautified*

him, nor for my part will I believe any thing they can prophesie, unless they tell me they will be kickt out of their Office.

Fourthly, that Government ceased, when Israel obtained a King, and now that England hath, and ever had a King, what shall wee doe with this inconsistent Government? Unless to fit our selves to entertaine the Eldership, wee cast off Monarchicall Government, and introduce a Government by States; for my part I wish that hand to wither that shall attempt to lop off the royall branches of our Land, whose right to the Crowne, and Kingly prerogative, are equally just to any Subject his possessing what he hath, nor is there any understanding Christian, reproachfully called Independent of any other opinion; so he may enjoy the liberty of his owne conscience without Civill coercion in point of Religion, he being to give an account to God of his owne soule; and every one being to beare his owne burthen, *the Father not being to answer for the Son, nor the Son for the Father.* Gal. 6. 5. Ezek. 18. 20. but in civill and temporall matters is ready to subject himselfe with the most submissive to Kingly Authority, according to the Law of the Nation where he lives. And may those cursed soules who contrive the obliterating of the glorious beings of our Kings heere, be suddainely snatched hence by a hand unlookt for; and yet I wish King *Charles* his returning to his Parliament, and hearkening to their wholesome Councells, for therein I conceive his flourishing and happinesse will most consist.

That there are, and hath been Civill Elders here and elsewhere, no man needs to doubt, it is obvious enough; and manifest to each capacity; our Judges at Westminster are nothing else, but in this sense Elders and Judges to sit in Counsell to determine and judge of criminall and other civill affaires, which wee continue still to this day: Therefore are our new Lay-Elders in this sense uselesse; and if wee must for other ends erect Jewells Sanhedrins in England, I have shewed you it is not warrantable for us so to doe, because *Moses* by Gods speciall appointment assembled 70. Elders to beare part of the Government with him, although it were urged with all this wit, zeale and fervency, it's possible for a Countrey Presbyter to palliate his people from his Pulpit with, yet his labour is all in vaine, and he but endeavour to justifie unwarrantable things, when as the unskillfull Sepulchre, cannot see a specious ghole on a good matter.

But perhaps he hath learned his lesson so far by rote, as to tell the people it was in Europe, first set up at Geneva by reverend Mr. *Calvin*, and since embraced by the States of Holland, and severall places of Germany, and

therefore why should not wee have it in England?

Answer in the same way of reason that in Rome is and hath bene a long time continued the Popish Religion, and professed, and maintained by the Emperour, by the Kingdome of Spaine, by the King of France, and some Princes of Germany, and therefore why should not we profess that Religion too? But more particularly to take off this cavill, I will make it appeare that that argument doth no waies concerne England.

The beginning of this Government at Geneva is well knowne, was by Mr. *Calvin* framed; yet if wee will beleve Historicks, not intended: for he perceiving the abuses, and too predominating tyranny of Bishops contrary to Gods word, Lording it over Gods Heritage, devised a way for freeing the people from that slavery, and the enlarging of Gods people, to cast off the Hierarchicall yoke, and so invented a new way, which he knew the giddy multitude (greedy of novelties) would be easily fascinated with, and that the rather because they groaned under the heavy pressure of their former slavery; wherefore he buzzed into the eares of the people that they should have none of these Lording Bishops, but they should be ruled by every Pastor in his respective Parish, and to submit to his censure, and because all should not hang on so slender a thread as the liking of an ignorant multitude, he bound the people by oath to give obedience to such orders as he with two other Ministers (for more grace to the businesse) had set downe, and appointed every Church being to be governed by it selfe, and the people sworne to obedience, and so every Church almost differing from other began to accuse one another of disobedience to the will of Christ in those things in which they differed, which occasioned much strife and contentions among them: for these Presbyters being men of flesh as well as the Bishop was, and not sect to the like infirmities, began to flatter as much or more over the people, as ever the Bishop did, and to exercise as much coercive power over mens consciences; wherefore the people seeing themselves nothing bettered by this new frame of government, but unadvisedly they had consented to a multiplication of tyranny; and that whereas formerly they had but one Bishop, which did something extort upon them, they now had a company of ignorant Presbyters, which did much survie the Bishop in domineering power over them, they then began to change upon the bit they had taken into their mouths, and began to murther against Mr. *Calvin*, who together with his two associates, the purwa-

ders of the people to embrace, and the contrivers of this kind of government, were in the heate of these discontents banished the Towne.

Mr. Calvin was now put to his shifts to appease this tumult, and when he had cast upon all assaies, he concluded none so probable, to take effect, as to admit some of the Citizens to joyne in government with the Presbyters, and so they might perhaps admit him with his new device of Presbyterian Ministry into the City againe, which fell out accordingly; for a few yeeres after the Citizens of Geneva had banished Calvin (saith judicious Hooker) in his preface to his booke intituled, Ecclesiasticall policy, such was the levity and inconstancy of those people, some places being in the interim fallen voide, and in want of a Minister, that they were not so willing to be rid of Calvin before, as they were now importunate to have him backe againe, and with severall letters and Inghagements did court him to returne unto them; Calvin considered with himselfe, that now was the time to make knowne unto them, he would be no more tenant at will under them; but if they would have him to be their Teacher againe, they must be content to admit a compleate forme of Discipline, which both they and their Pastors should be sworne to observe for ever after, of which Discipline the maine and principall parts were these; a standing Ecclesiasticall Court to be established, perpetuall Judges in that Court to be their Ministers, others of the people annually chosen (twice so many as they) to be Judges together with them in the same Court: And these two sorts to have power over mens manners, to determine all kinde of Ecclesiasticall causes, and to punish as far as with excommunication, all sorts of people.

This proposition of his did somewhat trouble them, for they considered that this government was little better then Popish Tyranny, presented to them under a new forme; for though for every Minister there were two Lay-men to sit and give voice in the Ecclesiasticall consistory; yet they feared that the filling up of these seates was but to please the minds of the people, to thinke their owne sway something, when as things were to come to tryall, their Pastors learning would over perswade simple people, who knowing the time of their Presidentship to be but short, would always stand in feare of their Ministers perpetuall authority; but notwithstanding these considerations, such were the straits the Citizens had brought themselves into through

through their owne giddinesse, that now they must of necessity embrace *Calvin* upon these or any other conditions, unlessse to their endlessse disgrace, they would with ridiculous lightnesse dismiss him whom they had with all earnestnesse, and after an importunate, and most urgent manner desired to retorne unto them; wherefore having driven themselves upon these exigents, they admit of Mr. *Calvin*, and his compound consulatory, *Anno Domini* 1541. And here was the beginning amongst Christians of Lay-Elders in their Church Government, which you may perceive [Reader] through necessity by a inconstant people in a troubled State was accepted of.

Now good morrow to your Infant worship, good Mr. Lay-Elder, or rather your spurious brat of a Geneva brable; I must tell you, you may be a handsome fellow, but you looke ill favourably in an English habit; but may you say unto me, your Taylor or High Priest was too blame (for no strange thing now a dayes for Taylor and Priest to meet in one person) to put you into the English mode; Let me tell you in your owne Country Phrase, you beseeame your Office, as a Sowe beseeames a saddle, you looke as strangely amongst us as an Owle at noone day; you must not thinke to make us daire under you, wee are rather like a flocks of little birds fright and chase you backe againe to your Arabian Desart; when wee come to Geneva, wee be governed by you, in the meane time wee do not desire you should governe us; nor indeede because you are so rightly entertained in Geneva, and Holland, are you his guests for us. For Geneva was a free City governed by Elders, and Towne Burgers before ever Mr. *Calvin* came there, who admitted some of those Alderman yearely into his Classis, & there were some little more colloar for that government amongst us, if our Judges, Justices, & Aldermen might be admitted into your respective Classes; but there is no such matter in our new Eldership, but the most silly fellowes generally are pitched upon to make Lay-Elders of; and truly this is the greatest peece of pollicy I have observed from our Presbyter, or High Priests in our Country, for by this meanes they themselves will rule the roost, the Lay-Elders being meere *Jack*s to be wound up and downe at pleasure, and the better to compasse this their ends and designs, some of them have wronged and abused the Parliament, in nominating unto them, tryars for the sufficiency of the Elders, to be chosen in their respective Classes, so insufficient and ignorant that cannot write their
owne

owne names, the best knowledge they have being to misreade a little English, and this I am informed was done by the present Incumbent at Standishe and some others; may more then so, when the Ordinance came downe, and that such men were by the Parliament appointed tryars to be Lay-Elders themselves, which the people not mindfull to thwart any thing the Parliament by the mouth of their Minister desired, voted it so, and so they were Judges themselves, and the parties to be judged of themselves: Like as if a Justice were made a Jaylor, or a Marshall, should commit a Souldier: To commit a man to himselfe which is against the rules of Law and reason; but no more of this, I conceive that this government being set up at Geneva, is no president imitable for England, only I thinke it were not amisse to follow their fashion a little before intrangling of our selves) in this; That seeing our fundamentall Lawes in Church subverted, and our liberties betrayed into the hands of Lay-Elders (for whose government there is no warrant in Scripture, I meane their governing Ecclesiasticall affaires) Wee should rowse up a godly spirit in our selves, and doe as the then free Citizens did by the domineering Presbyters in Geneva, banishing them thence: I say wee should kicke these Caterpillars out of our Kingdome, and sweeping this rubbish from the doores of our Temples, and whipping these money changers thence, beate the fellowes into their old trades and handicrafts againe.

It might I am confident procure some more warrantable and moderate government then this, which I refer to the serious consideration of our wise Parliament, in hopes their wisdomes will take due care to prevent the impending miseries of our Nation, for very many thousands will rather have moderate Episcopacy up, then this senselesse government of Lay-Elders, which are indeede no Rulers, but mere stalking Horses or Asses; or a disguise wherein the Presbyters may plunder the people of liberty of conscience, pretending it is not the Art of Clergy only; pritty judging; but no more of this, *salutis est absurdas opinionis accuratus refellere*, I will proceede to treat of that part or division of this worke lies next in order, to wit of spirituall Elders in generall, and that our Lay-Elders may not rightly be taken for such.

Every Bishop, Presbyter, Pastor, or other grave and reverend Divine, is rightly and truly called a spirituall Elder, and to prove this my assertion, I neede not wander far to fetch authority from rare Authors; the Apostles themselves have saved me a labour, as Peter the 1. 5. 1. *The Elders which are among you I exhort who are also an Elder* etc. John in his

2. and 3. Epistles styles himselfe an Elder; in the second thus, *The Elder unto the eldest Lady*; in the third *The Elder unto the welbelovèd Gaius*: and wee may reade Acts 6. 6. because the word of God should not be left, and the people, to serve tables, wherefore the Apostles desired the people to *looke out among themselves 7 men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom whom they admitted into holy Orders by praying and laying on of hands*, who were called Elders; so Paul Acts 14. 23. when he passed through severall Countries upon his being stoned at Lystra in Licaonia, ordained them Elders in every Church, Elders in that place by all Translators being rendred Presbyters or Bishops, men of holy Orders to succeed the Apostles, who being thereunto thus lawfully called, have Gods promise *to let his holy Spirit rest upon them even unto the end of the world*, Math. 28. 20. It being promised to such as teache his people to observe all things, *whatsoever I have commanded you even to such who had Commission to teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost*. Wee may reade likewise James 5. 14. *If any be sicke among you, let him send for the Elders of the Church, and let him pray over him, anointing him with oyle in the name of the Lord*; the word Elder being there translated Presbyter, which is of the same signification with us, as *Sacerdos* was under the Law. There are many more places of Scripture to prove spirituall Elders in the Church; But I will briefly shut up this point with the 20 of the Acts, where it appears, how Paul at Melitum called the Elders from Ephesus, verse the 27. and telling them *that they must see his face no more*, he charges them verse the 28. *that they should take heed unto themselves, and to all the flocks over which the holy Ghost had made them Bishops to feede the Church of God*; by all which, and other Texts of Scripture, it is evident that the word Elder generally in the new Testament, signifies feeding and praying Ministers, not loytering, lazie, Lay-Elders, Officers no more requisite in a Church, then a company of drones are usefull in a hive of Bees; unnecessary evils, where horseleeches to sucke the peoples bloud, who have no neede of Phlebotomy; but I leave the Jewish Laiety, which I hope will no waies arrogate this Office unto themselves, though their holy Fathers, their high Priests endued with great store of impudencie, and ignorance, tells them they are instated into holy Orders by *usurpation*, when with hands lifted up at their elections they rooke the Covenant, by which Covenant I would have them to understand, they are to degrade themselves from their Office, for it being on foote in Scotland, is no warrant for them to

continue it here in England, the words of the Covenant being, That wee shall endeavour the reformation of Religion in the Church of England, according to Gods holy word : and I cannot finde one Text in Scripture to warrant their calling in the Church, they being Lay-men ; nor will that argument which some frame from the Levites, having severall places of trust about the Temple, serve to prove their Office and Government.

It is true that in *Moses* time, *Gershon Cohath, and Merari, Levy* his three Sons, had the Office to pitch, to take downe, and to beare up and downe the Tabernacle, and the vessells thereof: the *Gershonites* charge was to carry the coverings and hangings of the Tabernacle : the *Cohathites* the chiefe things within the Sanctuary : and the *Merarites* had charge of the wood-workes, and the rest of the instruments of the Tabernacle ; This was their Office during their abode in the *Wildernesse*, whilst they were on their Journey, but afterwards when they were settled in the promised Land, *David* changed their Office, some being appointed to have charge of the Treasure of the Temple, 1 Chron. 26. 20. others to be Overseers and Judges, others to be Porters and Singers, 2 Chron. 23. 4. The Singers were to be clad in linnen robes, 2 Chron. 5. 12. hence doe some argue that the government by Elders, is no more then what was in *David*s time, when the Levites were.

The Levites were Judges and Overseers, to which objection I give this answer.

God by his divine and eternall decree had appointed the *Tribe of Levi* to serve at his Altar, and minister unto the people; as wee finde it recorded in the 10 of Deut. verse 8. God seperated the *Tribe of Levi* to beare the Arke of the Covenant of the Lord, and to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and to blesse in his name even to this day. And Deut. 11. and the 5. The Lord thy God hath chosen him out of all thy Tribes to stand and minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons for ever. And *Moses* in the 33 of Deut. verse 8. prays, That the *Urim and Thummim* of the Lord be with thine holy One, meaning in that place one of the *Tribe of Levi*, who verse the 10, shall teach *Jacob* thy Judgements, and *Israel* thy Law, they shall put incense before thy face, and burnt offerings upon thine Altar.

It is manifest by those places of Scripture, that it was Gods holy will that the *Tribe of Levi* should serve at his Altar, all of them being instated in holy orders, by imposition of hands; and although amongst them there were certaine degrees according to which *Paul* writ in the 1 to Tim. 3. 33. that they that have ministered well, get themselves a good degree, as

Godwyn.

Godwyn in his *Jewish Antiquities* fol. 22 observes, as when they had been a moneth initiated, they were to be presented unto God, Numb. 3. 15. and they were consecrated by imposition of hands, at 25 yeeres old, Num. 8. 24. And they were to carry the Tabernacle up & downe from 30 to 50, and afterwards they were to oversee and instruct the younger Levites in the manner of Bishops; but they were from the first to be instated in holy Orders, and then capable to be Overseers or Bishops as they laboured to get a good degree.

Now I presume none will be so silly as to follow our new Presbyterian Doctrine, which perswade that our government in Church by Lay-Elders, is no more but this, which our highly beneficed Brethren cry aloud in their Pulpits: For know, Reader, there is no Analogy betwixt the Levites and Lay-Elders. For first God appointed the one to serve at his Altar, but the other hath no calling therunto: and whereas God appointed *Moses* to assemble 70 Elders to beare part of the Government with him, that was only in temporall affaires, not in Church matters. *Moses* was overfurthered with being both King and Priest, of which I have shewed you before.

Secondly, these which had any calling or Office to serve in the Temple, were instated in holy Orders, being consecrated by the imposition of hands of the first borne, or sons of Israel, the representative Church. But these Lay-Elders are not admitted into holy Orders, nor are their hands filled with any thing save underhand bribes, which the people to prevent their utter ruine, are forced to give them to purchase their favour and friendship, in this age of persecuting tyrannicall Presbyterian Government; so that it is evident to any indifferent judgement, that the new created Elders of our dayes, have nothing to doe in our Church as spirituall Elders. I allowe that there may be in severall States both civill and spirituall Elders; but the civill Elders are not to meddle and joine with spirituall in Church affaires, which is the next thing in order I am to treat of.

There were in Israel saith Mr. *Godwyn* in his *Jewish Antiquities* fol. 197. two Consistories or Courts of justice; the one chiefly for Church businesse, the other for the affaires of the Common-wealth: The spirituall Consistory termed *Sanhedrin*, a Synagogue, the secular consistory termed *Sanhedrin*, a Counsell, and this civill Court consisted of 71, the odd one being to supply the roome of *Moses* over the first 70. Mr. *Purkas* in his *Pilgrimage* 112, and *Galatinus* conjectures, that in the Counsell

that condemned Christ, there were the whole number of 71. And as these two Courts were severall in their places, remote each from other; so were the matters discutable before them, of severall and distinct natures and qualities; as we may reade in the 2 of Chron. chapter 19. to the spirituall Court belonged matters spirituall or ceremoniall; to the secular Consistory matters civill or criminall; & so *Jehoshaphat* reforming many abuses in Church and Commonwealth, first appointed throughout all the fenced Cities of Judah secular Judges to determine criminall causes, and at Jerusalem he appointed a spirituall Court consisting of Levites, Priests, and the chiefe Fathers of Israel: *Amaziah* the high Priest being chiefe in causes spirituall for the Lord, and *Zebadiah* in causes criminall for the King; and this spirituall Court was, saith Mr. *Godwin*, the representative Church, and had the power of excommunication: hence is that saying in Mathew 18.16. *die Ecclesia*. This forme of distinct government in matters temporall and spirituall, is in most States of Christendome, and was (till of late the Presbyterian party contrived to bring all into a Chaos) imitated by us in England, we having spirituall and temporall Courts. The one not being to meddle in any matter which properly layed in the consufance of the other; for if they did, from the temporall Court was a writ of prohibition issueable to stay the proceedings of the spirituall: And if it appeared, the matter belonged to the spirituall Court, a writ of consultation was directed forth to the spirituall Court to proceede in the businesse; so that it is manifest they were not to joyn together in judicature; for although before in this treatise, I have shewed you that the high Priest did amongst the Jewes sit in the Sanhedrin of Elders, it was because he was a man excellently learned in the Talmud; for if weele beleve Mr *Godwino* he tells us that the high Priest sate there necessarily, is an error, for he was not elected into that company, unlesse he was a man of extraordinary wisdom, for he was Judge in the Synagogue, and was not *ex officio*, to meddle in the Sanhedrin; and for my part I cannot find that ever these consistories sate together in one Assembly, unlesse Math. 26.3. when they assembled to conspire the death of Christ, verse 5. *they consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him*; and this was decreed by Gods owne will before, he having prophesied of his sufferings before them, Math. 16.21. *That he should goe to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and Chiefe Priests, and Scribes.*

In Imitation whereof sure this new set up motley, medley, consistory, of our counter-company of Clergy, and Laity are joyned in one, to contrive

trive a way to crucifie Christs Spouse: For never were the Saints of God (Christs representative Church when assembled together) so scattered, broken, and persecuted, as they are now (and like to be worse, should this senselesse tyranny continue) under the hands of truell ignorant Elders. Things purposely called out of the meanest of the people, not capable of any shame, or sensible of any unworthy act, and so the fitter to put in execution the unjust directions of their imperious Pastor, and for the undoing of whom he please, must vote to excommunication any one the Parson privately grudges, Oh rare Rogues!

Reader pardon my expression, I beleeve I doe not erre in calling them so, for they are wandring Jewes and Vagabonds, they pretend they had a passe from Geneva to Scotland, and so for England, with private directions to come by Scotland first, not because they should not curse the old Proverb, *Omnemalum ab Aquilone*: But because coming from Scotland they would finde the better entertainment in England: It being at this day peopled with a Scottish generation, which like so many Larks dare under the Scotch Hobbies, & in a cowardly feare shroud their carcasses in rush-hilles, and there lie, suffering the Hobby to ruffe them of all their feathers, such as those would for feare give them the better entertainment.

Others for a foolish doting upon their Brethren, for they know not what, unlesse for betraying their Leidge Lord, and Sovereigne, having promised him Ayde, which they declined for the tempting pieces of 400000.l. (for in such a case though he was given up into the hands of his friends; yet it wastreachery in them) will give them the more hearty welcome, because they came from so good a people.

Now would our grave, wise, and honourable Parliament take seriously into their sage consideration the danger of these people remaining amongst us, who are enemies to, and inconsistent Ruleis in our State, pure Scotch incendiaries, to kindle new flames amongst us, that the frozen Scot may have another opportunity to warme his fingers at an English fire, which is likely to come to passe, if these malapart Officers be not quickly suppressed.

Nor can their wisdomes blame the Christians, who for defence of their just freedoms, and liberty of conscience, without any sinister ends, shall cause new stirs, and in defence of their liberties and Religion, endeavour to chafe this new tyranny forth of the Kingdome. And I am assured would their wisdomes but duely examine their businesse, heere they would plainly find, it is for no other end. And withall would their grave judge

ments but seriously poize the validity of their passe to come and settle here, they would finde it altogether insufficient, and no warrant either by Gods Law, or the Law of Nations for such people, by people of other Nations directed hither to settle and make a constant abode heer: And I am confident their Honours upon due consideration hereof, would either send them from Constable to Constable backe into Scotland, or else whip them quite home to Geneva; which that they may doe.

The Lord who is Ruler of all mens hearts, dictate this to his servants in the Parliament, that they may put their helping hands to this worke, and then the Lord prosper the worke of their hands; Oh prosper thou, O Lord, their handy worke!

I will but adde one reason more, why the Lay-Elders are not to meddle in the spirituall consistory; and that is, because they were never included within the power of the keyes given to the Apostles; and their Successors, which power hath from them devolved into our Church.

Some affirme the Gospel to have been preached heere by Paul the Apostle; but I cannot learne any certainty of that: But the Apostles being under the persecution of Nero, I finde that *Philip* and divers of the godly fled into France, who severed themselves asunder, the better to propogate the Gospel: about the 64 yeere after Christ he sent over into Brittain one *Josephus*, together with one *Simon Zelotes*, to preach unto the Brittaines, and administer the Sacraments according to the Rites of the Church of Greece, which *Josephus*, saith *William Malmesbury* in his booke *de Antiquitate Glasconici Monasterii*, was buried at Glasfenbury; and *John Bale* following the Authority of *Gyldas*, and other English Writers, saith that it was *Joseph of Arimathea*, and about this time did divers of this Nation receive the Christian faith, and were baptized.

Not long after all Authors agree that *Lucius* King of this Isle, sent to *Eleutherius* Bishop of Rome Anno Christi 177, not promising any subjection to his See, (that not being desired, only obtruded upon King *Henry* the second in *Becketts* businesse) but to say with such as were pricked in minde, Acts 2. 37. *Men and Brethren what shall we doe to be saved?*

Eleutherius understanding the desires of King *Lucius* to be baptized, and to professe and maintaine the Christian Religion, and withall perceiving the able parts and sufficiency of those two Brittaines, *Lucius* had for this purpose sent over to him, did consecrate them Bishops, and sent them backe into Brittain: And withall he taking into consideration that the converting of some, and establishing of all of this Isle in the Christian Faith,

Faith was a task too great for two to undergoe: Though he had knowledge of their faire progress herein; yet for their ease, helpe, and encouragement in so great a worke, he sent over more labourers after them into this Harvst; who for the better propogating of the faith, and winning of soules unto Christ, and that all might be instructed, they divided the Kingdome into Circuits amongst them. There being by *Lucius* and his Nobles appointed three superintendents, or Arch-bishops (instead of three Arch-Flaminis which ruled before in time of Paganisme) placed over the rest; one at London, another at Yorke, another at Carleon in Monmouth-shire. This Bishopricke of Carleon was after removed thence to St. Davids in Wales, thence into Normandy. Yorke continues Metropolitan still, London was translated to Canterbury by *Austin* the Monke. Lambert in his perambulation of Kent fol. 62.

And although the English Saxons had not received the Gospel till *Ethelberts* time, in whose Raigne *Gregory* the Pope upon occasion of seeing sweet faced boyes to be sould in the Market, and inquiring of them of what Nation and Countrey they were, he was told they were *Angli* and of the Province of Deira, their Kings name being *Ala*, to which *Gregory* replied, well may they be called *Angli à Deira liberandi*, to sing Hallelujah unto the Lord; whereupon *Austin* the Monke was sent over and preached in Ethelbert his Kingdome to the English Saxons at Canterbury, *Anno Christi 596.*

Yet reverend *Bede*, and divers others testifie that the Britons, who by the impetuous fury of the Saxons were beaten hence into Wales, embraced the Christian faith many hundred yeeres before *Austins* time, *Lamberts* Perambulation of Kent 19. *Holinshed* History of England 51, and had their Church government by convocations & assemblies of the most learned and best Divines, (which in some course and order, continued amongst us, till this new fashioned Presbyters started up, but never had any Lay-men to joyne with them, in that action, it being conceived not to be warranted by Gods word.

Some perhaps will wonder at me that I should digresse so far from my purpose for vindication of Bishops, affirming them to be by *Lucius* our first Christian King established in this Land, I might say they were ordained by the Apostles themselves, *Act. 10. 18.* but this is no part of my purpose, only laid in the way to prove our Church by the Apostles planted heere, some say by *Paul*, but certaine by *Philip*, and by the Church of Rome in after times (which then was the Church) much propagated.

I say it is not my purpose to vindicate Episcopacy; I am too weak to prop to uphold such a tottering and reeling Fabrick: Yet armed inwardly with truth, outwardly with argument: I will boldly tell you, Reader, (I care not who wonder at me, let them be wondering still, and in their wonder snarle at me) I would rather be subject to moderate Episcopacy, then our Classicall Presbytery, such Episcopacy as should not Lord it over Gods Heritage; for wee know our Saviour rebuked James and John, Mar. 10. 42. Luke 22. 25. *When the one desired to sit on his right hand, the other on his left, in his Kingdome, saying, The Kings of the Gentiles beare rule over them, and their great ones exercise Authority upon them, but it shall not be so amongst you.*

Such Episcopacy as should have no temporall honour or office to withdraw them from their spirituall function, there being appointed in every County one Superintendent or Bishop, who with his Assembly of Divines of that County should governe the Church, and decree Ecclesiasticall Causes; I say such Episcopacy I would rather embrace, and submit unto it, then a company of ignorant Elders; for better it were to be governed with prudence and knowledge, then with pride and ignorance, two things incident to our Lay-Elders, and this were agreeable to the word of God, the power of the keyes or of Ecclesiasticall Authority being given to the Apostles, and their Successors, Apostles, and Ministers, not Lay-Elders; I say the power of the keyes being given to all the Apostles in generall, not to Peter only as is affirmed by Cajetan in his book *de primatu Romane Ecclesie cap. 5.* and by Jerome in his first booke against Jovinianus, *quod sine dubio omnes Apostoli a Christo, & non a Petro susceperunt claves.* And the Holy Ghost is plaine in it, whatsoever yee shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, Math. 18. 18. and the 1 of the Corinth. 5. 4. *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when yee are gathered together, and my Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, so deliver such an one unto Satan, &c.* And Joh. 20. 23. Christ came and stood in the midst of his Disciples after his resurrection, and said *peace be unto you, receive yee the Holy Ghost, whose soever sinnes yee remit, they are remitted unto them &c.* All which places of Scripture plainly shew that the keyes were given to all the Apostles in generall, though in the 16 of Matthew, they were given to Peter alone, that is to be understood, saith one, that Peter was to have power over the rest of the Disciples, but as to others their power was all alike. And Christ in the 28 of Math. 19. delegating this power unto the Apostles in generall, *bid them goe and teach all Nations,*

Nations, and verſeth 30. *Let I am wiſh you even unto the end of the world,* he promiſing his ſpirit to be with them, that is in their ſucceſſion to the worlds end; their Succeſſors though ordained by men, having the ſame power of Jurisdiction the Apoſtles had, as *Auguſtine* in his firſt booke *de Doctrina Chriſtiana*, cap. 18. plainly affirms. *Pe- riſſaſis data Apoſtolicis & ſucceſſoribus, non data ſuit propter magis, ſed propter Eccleſiam, qua propter perſeverante Eccleſia poſſeſſa data Apoſtoliſi ac- buſ perſeverare.*

I have been a little too tedious in this particular, but Reader your pardon, it was only to ſhow who have Eccleſiaſticall power, and are to medle in the Church, and it is plaine they are the Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors, men lawfully ordained, and having a lawfull calling thereunto, 1 Tim. 3. 7. 4. 14. by the laying on of hands of the Preſbytery of the firſt borne of Iſrael the repreſentative Church, Acts 6. 6. He brewes 12. 23. *not raſhly*, 1 Tim. 5. 22. but conſultly *inſtating ſuch in holy Orders as are blameleſſe*, apt to teach, *not covetous, not a Novice, leſt being liſted up with pride*, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil, 1 Tim. 3. he muſt upon examination likewiſe be found to be one, which may be able by ſound Doctrine both to exhort and convince the galeſſers Titus 1. 9. and ſuch as theſe being admitted into holy Orders, to teach and inſtruct others, have Apoſtolicall power in their Aſſemblies to binde and looſe upon earth, and ſo dic *Eccleſie*, expreſſed in the 18 of Mathew the 16. is to be underſtood of men in holy Orders aſſembled together to binde and looſe upon earth, 1 Cor. 5. 4. as I have already ſhewed you.

It doth not follow that every Preſbyter in his Pariſh with his Claſſe of Elders hath this power, it were abſurde to alledge it, I have ſhewen you that this power was given to the Apoſtles in generall, and their Succeſſors, and the ſpiritual Conſiſtory muſt conſiſt of ſuch 1 Cor. 5. 4.

Now Lay Elders can no waies be ſaid Succeſſors to the Apoſtles, they neither being inſtated in holy Orders, nor within the rules preſcribed by St. Paul, to be admitted thereunto; unleſſe we muſt in this topſturvy time of ours, ſend our grave, wiſe Doctours to the ſchool againe to be taught by ſilly Lay Elders, which ſcarce know their A. B. C. nor fit to exhort, much leſſe to convince ſuch, and ſo head *Alapies* to the preſents of the Primitive Churches, obtruding as Larcies no waies claiming from Levi to be Rulers and Governours

in our Church, such a Lasciety as I may justly say are more Idols in our Church; so that wee have wrought a priuy worke, and brought about a fine Reformation; instead of Pictures, and Crucifixes in stones, and windowes, which with much zeale were demolished, wee have placed in our Churches walking Images, things that represent Elders, and which the people worship as Elders, but really and truly, are none, in the littrell sence they are not Elders, grave, wise, and expert as I have shewed you; and admit they were, yet they are Laymen, not truly Church Officers, as spirituall Elders, and are not to joyne with spirituall Elders in any Church affaires; so that for the people to worship them as Elders, or to rise up before them, is to commit Idolatry; to prevent the occasion of which, good King *Hezekiah* cauted the brazen Serpent (which was set up for a good end to heale the people that were bitten of Serpents, Numbers 21.) *so he broken in pieces,* 2 of Kings 18/4.

In imitation of which good Act, as also in commiseration of the free borne people of England, groaning, under the Tyranny and slavery of this worse then high Commission Court, I hope our happy Parliament who hitherto have shewen themselves ready and willing to redresse grievances, will not in this time of necessity crying loud unto them for helpe, forget their wonted practise of goodnesse, to relieve distressed people, and take off the heavy pressures of the Kingdome, but will rid the people of this one and only grievance in the Kingdome; neither warranted by Gods Law, nor the Lawes of this Kingdome (any further then it is their pleasure to continue it.) And they will ingage a multitude of prayers for their prosperous proceedings in all their undertakings, the which that they may speedily doe the Almighty God of Heaven who art a present remedy in all distresses, and a ready helpe at hand for them that are in misery, the only wise God, the great Counsellour, and ruler of all men hearts, dictate this to his servants in the Parliament, that wee may be freed from this intollerable slavery to Gods glory, the Parliaments Honour, and our owne joy and comfort in the Lord Jesus, Amen.

Thus have I briefly couched together some collections, and short meditations of mine owne, which to the indifferents, and not fore-biassed judgement will give some satisfaction in the businesse I have treated of, that these fine feathered Buzzards, Lay-Elders, deckt with Ecclesiasticall

Ecclesiasticall Plumets, are mere counterfeits, Seniramis, Elephants which were but stuffed Oxen hides; which had a gallant undehored Army in substance, counterfeit Diamonds, not such as Christs Spouse lookt comely with, Cantabrigie Holcon-hall crownes, not lawfully stampd with Cæsars Image, Scotch twenty-pences, the false coine of a copper Nation, not currant English, but such as every one may lawfully deny, and I am confident the wise and judicious Reader seriously considering this will not wish the yong Dotterell Birds be inticed with chaffe to be caught in this net, though never so privily laid, but will beare off and keepe himselfe free, till he see them fall in their owne mischiefs, and themselves caught in the snare which they have privily laid for others, and if unadvisedly through ignorance he hath suffered himselfe to be drawen in to consent unto this government; yet he will in time untangle himselfe from the bondage thereof.

As for the perverse and obstinate Presbyter which hath wedded the government, together with some fat Benefice, and cannot divorce himselfe from the one without leaving the other, having vowed perpetuall incumbency to himselfe; I know his heart is hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and I cannot diswade him from his Classicall beneficiall cure: *Let him that is unclean be unclean still*, spoken to obstinate and wilfull sinners; for my part, I doe not seeke to wash Blackmoores, I'll give him leave at his Sunday dinners, and spirituall pig-feasts, when none is by but his Lay-Elders to raile against me, and would extreamely thanke the pontificall Parson would he but write any thing, subscribed with his owne hand in contradiction to what I have here writ, that I might have further occasion to anatomize the tyranny of him, and his Elders.

In the meane time what I have heere writ shall suffice, hoping shortly to heare that this Government will be abolished, so that wee shall neither neede to wrestle any longer against it in words, nor with Peter to draw the sword to cut off the High Priest servants ears: *Adams*, who had he lived till now would have beene, Crop the leader in this teame of Lay-Elders, but I say I hope to see these Hobby-Horses anyoked againe before they run to woode with the Church (for they must needs goe whom the Devill drives;) And having loosed them out of their Ecclesiasticall Tresser, wee will turne the Jades to their old Rustich drudgeries againe, which will be the better for

them. The weaker it is; because they will do the same thing for themselves again; and it cannot be made so for them as it is made from their winning conditions, and our safety from the will of them: So that I conclude this work with an earnest desire that our way speedily come to pass, and the Kingdom of Heaven.

As for the persons and opinions Presbyter which hath wedded the government, together with some of the members, and cannot do voice himself in the one without leaving the other, having vowed perpetual association to himself; I know his heart is hardened through the deceitfulness of him, and I cannot divorce him from his Ecclesiastical Ecclesiastical care: Let him that is married be married still, spoken to oblige and willful sinners; for my part, I do not look to walk Blackmores, I give him leave at his Sunday dinner and spiritual pig-stalls, when none is by but his Lay-Brothers to raise gainst me, and would extremely thank the goddardly Parson would he put write any thing subscribed with his own hand in contradiction to what I have here writ, that I might have further occasion to answer the vanity of him, and his Elders.

In the mean time what I have here writ shall suffice, hoping shortly to write that the Government will be abolished, so that we shall not be obliged to write it any longer against it in words, nor with Pen to draw the sword to cut off the High Priest (without leave taken, who had he lived still now would have been, Crag the leader in this cause of Lay-Brothers but I say I hope to see the Holy-Holies unyoked again before this man to woods with the Church (for they must needs goe whom the Devil drives); And having loosed them out of their Ecclesiastical Ties, we will turn the Ladies to their old Russian dresses again, which will be the better for them.